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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### ARCHÆOLOGICAL CONGRESSES IN FRANCE IN 1886.

During the entire summer, archæological Congresses in France have followed each other in almost continuous succession, and problems of history and of archæology of great interest have been often discussed. The Congress of the *Sociétés Savantes*, held every year at the Sorbonne, during Easter week, under the presidency of the Minister of Public Instruction, opens the series. It is there that the delegates of the provincial societies and the members of the University are gathered together. But, a too extensive multiplication of the sections takes away a part of its interest: archæology has a special section, and still one-half of what might be comprised in it is allowed to escape, being incorporated, partly in the section of Anthropology, partly in the section of the Beaux-Arts, and even in that of Geography, a section newly created to the detriment of the others. The *Journal Officiel*, the *Temps*, the *Bulletin Monumental*, etc., have given detailed reports of the papers presented at the Congress of the Sorbonne, and we will refer the reader to them, confining ourselves to noticing the Gallic discoveries of Lasgrais and of Oye, the communications of M. de Marsy on the crypts of Saint-Martin at Tours, and the very important discussion on the division of the Romanesque schools of architecture, in which took part MM. Anthyme Saint-Paul, abbé Müller, de Lasteyrie and Lefèvre-Pontalis.

From the 8th to the 11th of June, the *Société des Antiquaires de Picardie* convoked at Amiens the historians and the archæologists of the neighboring provinces, to celebrate, by historical sittings, the fiftieth anniversary of its foundation. Three days were devoted to discussions and to an inspection of the city. The last day was employed in making an excursion to Nesles and Ham. We must recall, among the works presented at this congress, a very interesting account of the prehistoric discoveries made at Abbeville by Boucher de Perthes and his successors, presented by M. d'Ault-Dumesnil, the account of the last discoveries made in Picardie, from M. Danicourt, the researches on the engravers of Picardie by MM. Macqueron and Delignières, the discussion on the preservation of objects of art raised by M. le comte de Marsy, etc. In order to heighten the éclat of this reunion, the *Société des Antiquaires de Picardie* organized, in several

halls of the Museum, the construction of which we owe to its efforts, a local retrospective exposition, important on more than one account.

At the end of the same month, the *Société Gay-Lussac* called at Limoges a congress which embraced all the branches of human knowledge: consequently, the discussions could not help being very incomplete, to say the least. But, at the same time, an Exposition was opened in this city, devoted exclusively to works of enamel, unique, from the retrospective point of view, on account of the number and the importance of the pieces of early Limoges work which figured in it.

From the 1st to the 8th of August, Nantes received the *Société française d'Archéologie*, which came to hold its 53rd congress. Last year, on the occasion of the Congress of Montbrison, we spoke (*Am. Journal of Archæology*, vol. I, pp. 401-4) of the origin and aim of this association, founded by Arcisse de Caumont and directed by M. le comte de Marsy; we will, therefore, refer to it very briefly. The works presented had reference more especially to the history and the archæology of Bretagne. The visit to the Departmental Museum, the excursions to the Roman sites of Mauves, of Petit-Mars and of Cléons, the studies on the crypts of the cathedral of Nantes and the church of Guérande, on the castles of Champto-Ceaux and Clisson, of Nantes and Haute-Goulaine, of Ranrouët and Bretesche, furnished subjects for numerous and interesting discussions in which many French and foreign archæologists took part. MM. de Villefosse, member of the Institute, Maître, F. Chaillou and Dr. Plicque discoursed principally on questions of Roman archæology in connection with the recent discoveries of the theatres of Mauves, of Petit-Mars, and of the *Villa des Cléons*. MM. le comte de l'Estourbeillon, Palustre, de Kersauson, Montfort, and Bougouin gave curious details on the military architecture and on the decoration of the castles of Bretagne. Finally, religious architecture found numerous expounders in MM. de Laurière, L. de Farcy, abbé Gaborit, G. d'Espinay, de Marsy, E. Travers, etc. M. Emile Caron made known to the congress the important discovery of Byzantine paintings and mosaics of the XIII century which was made during the year 1885 in the Mosque Kahrié Djâmi at Constantinople. M. de Laurière gave the first notice of the discovery of an altar in the church of Valcabrière and of that of a Roman tomb in the Roman campagna. An excursion to the ancient city of Chateau-Oriant ended the congress of the *Société française d'Archéologie*, and the next reunion will take place at Soissons and at Laon in 1887.

The *Association pour l'avancement des Sciences* next held a meeting at Nancy, August 12-16, its 14th congress. This association, which numbers several thousand members, embraces within its scope the entire field of scientific studies, from political economy and geography to the exact sciences, natural history, and medicine. It occupies itself merely incident-

ally with archæology, from a prehistoric point of view and in connection with anthropology. Finally, a society of Belgian artists, the *Gilde de Saint-Thomas et de Saint-Luc de Gand*,—which has for object the study of Christian monuments, and the formation of artists (architects, painters, and sculptors) who should devote themselves exclusively to the reproduction and restoration of works of the Middle Ages,—traversed, from August 21–27, a part of Champagne and of the Ile-de-France. Reims, Laon, Châlons, Soissons, Pierrefonds, and Noyon, were the points visited by the *Gilde de Saint-Thomas*, which, under the direction of its president M. le baron Béthune d'Ydewalle, held each day, after its excursions, a sitting for the discussion of questions of art relating to the study of the monuments visited. A certain number of French archæologists joined themselves to the Belgium members and took part in the labors of the *Gilde*.

In closing, we will mention the *Congrès d'histoire et d'archéologie de Belgique*, founded last year at Anvers by the federation of the learned societies of Belgium (see JOURNAL, I, pp. 487–8) and which held its meeting at Namur, August 17–19. During two days the Congress, divided into three sections, listened to numerous communications, of which the most important was that of MM. de Puydt and Sohest on the existence of the quaternian man in the grotto of the *Biche aux Roches* at Spy, in the province of Liège. A long and interesting discussion arose on the origin and progress of the Frankish populations that peopled Belgium. Namur possesses a very considerable Frankish museum, which is most admirably classified by M. Béquet, and the objects which it contains served as a basis for discussions, notably on the question, not yet elucidated, whether the objects in gold taken from the cemeteries in the provinces of Liège, Namur, and Hainault, are works imported from the East, or were manufactured in the country itself. The question of archæological maps, already raised in France and Portugal, and the proposition for a system of international conventional signs for prehistoric epochs, analogous to that adopted at the Congress of Buda-Pesth, were brought forward. During the coming year, the archæological society of Namur is to come to an understanding with the French archæological society on the presentation of a project which may serve as a basis for international work. Namur is especially rich in gold-work of the Middle Ages. The Sisters of Nôtre-Dame preserve in their convent a considerable number of remarkable works of art, coming principally from the ancient abbey of Oignies, many of which are the work of a monk, Ugo, who in the XIII century excelled in the work of engraving on gold and silver. The Chapter of the cathedral, also, possesses some interesting pieces: a large cross, a portable altar, and a small *retable* ornamented with translucent enamels. The members of the Congress had every facility afforded them to examine these works of art, which form the

most numerous and important collection to be found in Belgium. The Congress terminated by making an excursion to the ruins of the feudal castle of Montaigle and an exploration of the Frankish cemetery near Yvoir, and by a visit to the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous, a gigantic work undertaken about ten years ago, under the direction of M. le baron Béthune d'Ydewalle, for the purpose of reconstituting an abbey of the XIII century. The work is well advanced and was much admired by all who took part in the Belgian Congress, whose next meeting will take place at Bruges, in 1887.

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